

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of conducting an auction among a plurality of bidders, wherein each of said plurality of bidders competing for a lot to be auctioned by an auction requester, said method comprising:
allowing each bidder to place a respective bid for each of a plurality of bid parameters established for said lot, wherein said plurality of bid parameters includes a price parameter and at least one non-price parameter; and
making bids received from each said bidder for said price and said non-price parameters available to said auction requester in real-time.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
for each said bidder, generating a total bid for said lot by combining all bids placed by each said bidder, wherein said total bid equals in value to the bid for said price parameter placed by the corresponding bidder.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein allowing each said bidder to place said respective bid includes performing the following in real-time:
displaying a data entry page on a corresponding bidder computer terminal accessible to respective one of said plurality of bidders, wherein said data entry page includes a data entry field for each of said plurality of bid parameters; and
allowing each said bidder to access said data entry page and place said respective bid for each of said plurality of bid parameters by entering said respective bid in said data entry field for corresponding bid parameter.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein displaying said data entry page includes:
executing an auction software at a remote computer connected to each said bidder computer terminal via a communication network, wherein said auction software, upon execution, generates said data entry page; and

sending said data entry page generated upon execution of said auction software over said communication network to respective bidder computer terminals to be displayed thereon.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein said data entry page is displayed by executing an auction software resident on each said bidder computer terminal, wherein said auction software, upon execution, generates said data entry page.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein generating said total bid for each said bidder includes performing the following in real-time for each said bidder:
multiplying each bid received for a corresponding non-price parameter by zero
and aggregating all zero-multiplied bids, thereby generating a null value;
and
combining said null value with said respective bid for said price parameter to generate said total bid.
7. The method of claim 2, further comprising making said total bid by each corresponding bidder available to said auction requester in real-time.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
making at least two bids placed by a first bidder from said plurality of bidders available in real-time to a second bidder from said plurality of bidders,
wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
displaying a bid graph in real-time on at least one of the following:
a first computer terminal accessible to one of said plurality of bidders; and
a second computer terminal accessible to said auction requester,
wherein said bid graph graphically depicts information about at least two bids placed by each of said one of said plurality of bidders and at least one other bidder from the remainder of said plurality of bidders, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one non-price parameter includes lead time; labor length; and contract length.
11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the following for each said bidder: preventing each bid initially placed for corresponding non-price parameter from being unintentionally modified thereafter during said auction; and crediting, as a default, any non-initial bid entry by each said bidder to said price parameter only.
12. The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing said auction requester to establish said plurality of bid parameters for said lot.
13. A computer readable storage medium having stored thereon instructions for conducting an electronic auction among a plurality of bidders, wherein each of said plurality of bidders competing for a lot having at least one item to be auctioned by an auction requester, wherein said instructions, when executed by a processor, cause said processor to perform the following in real-time:
allow each bidder to place a respective bid for each of a plurality of bid parameters established for said lot, wherein said plurality of bid parameters includes a price parameter and at least one non-price parameter;
for each said bidder, generating a total bid for said lot by combining all bids placed by each said bidder, wherein said total bid equals in value to the bid placed for said price parameter by corresponding bidder; and
make said total bid along with each bid for a non-price parameter by each corresponding bidder available to said auction requester.
14. The computer readable storage medium of claim 13 having stored thereon said instructions, which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to further perform the following in real-time:
make at least two bids placed by a first bidder from said plurality of bidders available to a second bidder from said plurality of bidders, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter.

15. The computer readable storage medium of claim 13 having stored thereon said instructions, which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to further perform the following in real-time:
display a bid graph on a first computer terminal accessible to one of said plurality of bidders and on a second computer terminal accessible to said auction requester, wherein said bid graph graphically depicts information about at least two bids placed by each of said one of said plurality of bidders and at least one other bidder from the remainder of said plurality of bidders, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter.
16. The computer readable storage medium of claim 13 having stored thereon said instructions, which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to prevent each bid initially placed for corresponding non-price parameter from being unintentionally modified thereafter during said electronic auction.
17. A system for conducting an on-line auction among a plurality of bidders, wherein each of said plurality of bidders competing for a lot to be auctioned by an auction requester, said system comprising:
means for allowing each bidder to place a respective bid for each of a plurality of bid parameters established for said lot, wherein said plurality of bid parameters includes a price parameter and at least one non-price parameter;
and
means for making bids received for each non-price parameter available to said auction requester in real-time.
18. The system of claim 17, further comprising:
for each said bidder, means for multiplying each bid received for a corresponding non-price parameter by zero and aggregating all zero-multiplied bids, thereby generating a null value;

for each said bidder, means for combining said null value with said respective bid
for said price parameter to generate a total bid for said lot; and
means for making said total bid by each corresponding bidder available to said
auction requester in real-time.

19. The system of claim 17, further comprising:
means for making at least two bids placed by a first bidder from said plurality of
bidders available in real-time to a second bidder from said plurality of
bidders, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price
parameter.
20. The system of claim 17, further comprising:
means for displaying a bid graph in real-time on at least one of the following:
a first computer terminal accessible to one of said plurality of bidders; and
a second computer terminal accessible to said auction requester,
wherein said bid graph graphically depicts information about at least two bids
placed by each of said one of said plurality of bidders and at least one other bidder
from the remainder of said plurality of bidders, wherein at least one of said at least
two bids is for a non-price parameter.
21. The system of claim 17, wherein said means for allowing each said bidder to place
said respective bid includes:
means for displaying a data entry page on a corresponding bidder computer
terminal accessible to respective one of said plurality of bidders, wherein
said data entry page includes a data entry field for each of said plurality of
bid parameters; and
means for allowing each said bidder to access said data entry page and place said
respective bid for each of said plurality of bid parameters by entering said
respective bid in said data entry field for corresponding bid parameter.
22. A system for conducting an electronic auction among a plurality of bidders,
wherein each of said plurality of bidders competing for a lot to be auctioned by an

auction requester, said system comprising:

a first computer operable by a first bidder from said plurality of bidders and configured to allow said first bidder to place a respective bid for each of a plurality of bid parameters established for said lot, wherein said plurality of bid parameters includes a price parameter and at least one non-price parameter;

a second computer in communication with said first computer via a first communication network, wherein said second computer is configured to receive from said first computer over said first communication network all bids placed by said first bidder; and

a third computer operable by said auction requester and in communication with said second computer via a second communication network, wherein said second computer is configured to send each bid received from said first bidder for each non-price parameter over said second communication network to said third computer in real-time.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein said second computer is further configured to: multiply each bid received for a corresponding non-price parameter by zero and aggregate all zero-multiplied bids, thereby generating a null value; combine said null value with said respective bid for said price parameter to generate a total bid value for said first bidder; and send said total bid value for said first bidder to said third computer in real-time over said second communication network.
24. The system of claim 22, wherein the first communication network is the Internet.
25. The system of claim 22, wherein said second communication network is the same as the first communication network.
26. The system of claim 22, further comprising: a fourth computer in communication with said second computer via said first communication network, wherein said fourth computer is configured to

allow a second bidder from said plurality of bidders to send said respective bid for said each of said plurality of bid parameters to said second computer over said first communication network, and wherein said second computer is configured to transmit over said first communication network at least two bids received from said second bidder to said first computer for said first bidder's review, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter.

27. The system of claim 22, wherein said second computer is configured to prevent each bid initially received from said first bidder for corresponding non-price parameter from being unintentionally modified thereafter during said electronic auction.
28. The system of claim 22, wherein said second computer is configured to transmit data for a bid graph to said first computer in real-time over said first communication network, wherein said data for said bid graph includes information about at least two bids placed by each of said first bidder and at least one other bidder from the remainder of said plurality of bidders, wherein at least one of said at least two bids is for a non-price parameter, and wherein said first computer is configured to graphically display said bid graph in real-time.
29. A method of conducting an auction among a plurality of bidders, wherein each of said plurality of bidders is competing for a lot on auction using a respective computer terminal, said method comprising:
receiving from each bidder's computer terminal a respective bid for each of a plurality of bid parameters established for said lot, wherein said plurality of bid parameters includes a price parameter and at least one non-price parameter; and
for a first bidder from said plurality of bidders, facilitating a display of a bidding history for said first bidder and a feedback information for said first bidder on said first bidder's computer terminal in real-time, wherein said bidding history for said first bidder includes information about one or more bids

placed by said first bidder, and wherein said feedback information for said first bidder includes information about bids placed by one or more of said plurality of bidders other than said first bidder.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein said bidding history for said first bidder includes at least one of the following:
- a first most recent set of bids placed by said first bidder for said plurality of bid parameters; and
 - a second most recent set of bids placed by said first bidder for said plurality of bid parameters, wherein said second most recent set of bids immediately precedes said first most recent set of bids in time.
31. The method of claim 29, wherein said feedback information includes at least one of the following:
- a first most recent bid from a second bidder from said plurality of bidders, wherein said first most recent bid represents the best value for said price parameter from among all bids received for said price parameter from said plurality of bidders; and
 - a second most recent bid from a third bidder from said plurality of bidders, wherein said second most recent bid represents the best value for one of said at least one non-price parameter from among all bids received for said one of said at least one non-price parameter from said plurality of bidders.